1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-8 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

different fashion from all other, and the *Chingulays* will not use them.

"They have a peculiar way by themselves of *preserving Flesh*. They cut a hollow Tree and put honey in it, and then fill it up with flesh, and stop it up with clay. Which lyes for a reserve to eat in time of want.

"It has usually been told me that their way of *catching Elephants* is, that when the Elephant lyes asleep they strike their ax into the sole of his foot, and so laming him he is in their power to take him. But I take this for a fable, because I know the sole of the Elephants foot is so hard, that no axe can pierce it at a blow; and he is so wakeful that they can have no opportunity to do it.

"For portions with their Daughters in marriage they give hunting Dogs. They are reported to be courteous. Some of the *Chingulays* in discontent will leave their houses and friends, and go and live among them, where they are civilly entertained. The tamer sort of them, as hath been said, will sometimes appear, and hold some kind of trade with the tame Inhabitants, but the wilder called *Ramba-Vaddahs* never show themselves."

From Knox's account it is evident that in his time or a little before this, some of the Veddas were in touch with the court and were even sufficiently amenable to discipline to be of use as an auxiliary fighting force, indeed, there is abundant evidence that long before this a part of the inhabitants of Ceylon, with enough Vedda blood in them for their contemporaries to call them Veddas, were politically organized and constituted a force whom the rulers of the island found it necessary to consider. Upon this subject we cannot do better than quote part of a letter from Mr H. Parker in which this authority states his views on this subject. "At the time when Sinhalese history begins, a part of them [Veddas] had reached a far more advanced state than the others. They were politically organised, and according to the Mahavansa had a supreme king and subordinate chiefs 80 years after Wijaya became king[1].

[1] "He established the yakkhas Kalavela in the eastern quarter of the city [Anuradhapura]; and the chief of the yakkhas, Citta, he established on the lower side of the Abhaya tank. He (the king), who knew how to accord his protection with

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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"The invaders, or rather settlers, from the valley of the Ganges intermarried with these more advanced natives, and became the Sinhalese of the present day (with a later mixture of Tamil or Indian blood).

"The wilder natives continued to lead the life of their primitive ancestors, and only to a very limited extent intermarried with the Sinhalese.

"Three or four centuries ago the Vaeddas were spread over the Matale district and the North-western Province, and I believe Sabaragamuwa[1]."

discrimination, established the slave born of the yakkha tribe, who had formerly rendered him great service, at the southern gate of the city. He established within the garden of the royal palace the mare-faced yakkhini, and provided annually demon offerings to them as well as to others.

"In the days of public festivity, this monarch, seated on a throne of equal eminence with the yakkha chief Citta, caused joyous spectacles, representing the actions of the devas as well as of mortals to be exhibited.....

"This monarch befriending the interests of the yakkhas, with the co-operation of Kalavela and Citta, who had the power (though yakkhas) of rendering themselves invisible (in the human world), conjointly with them, enjoyed his prosperity." *Mahawansa*, Chapter X, p. 44 (Tournour's translation). Further, the same king "provided...a temple [or "tala tree," the readings differ] for the Vyadha-deva" which Mr Parker states must refer to the Vedda God.

[1] Additional evidence for this is given by Nevill who says—"I have unpublished MSS. which represent the Vaeddas as found in the forests north of Putlam at the time of Bhuwaneka Bahu Raja of Kotta (about 1466 A.D.), and another which represents Vaeddas as the chief inhabitants of the Matale district in the region of Raja Sinha, about 1635 A.D." (*Taprobanian*, Vol. II, April 1883, p. 30). With regard to Veddas in Sabaragamuwa, Bailey notes that—"Though traces of their former existence there are evident and numerous, there is every reason to believe that many centuries have passed since they were there. Fields, villages and families yet retain the name Veddahs, as Weddeya pangoo, Wedde coombore, Wedde watte, Wedde ella, Wedde gala, Weddege etc.....Indeed, Saffragam, or Habara gamowa, means the district of Veddahs, or barbarous people: and in this form of the word, the former existence of Veddahs again can be traced, as Habara goddege, Habara kadowa, etc. It is traditional throughout Saffragam, that once Veddahs predominated over Sinhalese in that district, and that, as the latter gained ground, the former withdrew towards Bintenne and Wellasse.....Mr Macready, of the Civil Service, has given me very important proof of the existence of Veddahs 'near the Samanta mountains' [Adam's Peak]. He has given me the translation of some stanzas from a Sinhalese poem, written about 400 years ago, called the Pirawi Sandese, or the dove's message. The poem treats of a message sent, by means of a dove, from Cotta (near Colombo) to Vishnu at Dondera, at the extreme south of the island. The dove takes its course exactly over the district lying below Adam's Peak. The poet addresses the dove, and tells her she will see 'the daughters of the Veddahs' clothed in Riti bark, their hair adorned with peacock's plumes. So wild are they that the poet describes the herds of deer as being startled at the sight of them." ("Wild Tribes of the Veddahs of

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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Turning now to the message sticks, certain conventional signs scratched on leaves or flat slips of wood were at times sent by Sinhalese chiefs to the Veddas as an intimation that they required them to bring venison and honey. These signs always took one form, representing a carrying stick (*pingo*), to each end of which a circular object representing a pot of honey was attached. By the side of the pot of honey there were generally drawn two short vertical lines, immediately beneath which were a number of rather longer horizontal lines. Each pair of horizontal lines represented a joint of venison and the vertical lines immediately above them the cord by which they would be suspended from the *pingo*. As far as we could determine no other form of written message ever passed between the Sinhalese and Veddas, but there is no doubt that although the Sitala Wanniya Veddas knew nothing of such messages the Danigala Veddas recognised their meaning and acted on them. Mr Bibile told us that on one occasion when he had sent this message scratched on an *ola* leaf to the headman of the Danigala Veddas he had received the honey and venison he had asked for in about a week. We were told that on receiving this message a Vedda might say

Dik, dik, ewuwā; kac kuṭṭā
Waṭa kuru ewuwā; paeni muṭṭā[1]
Koṭa koṭa ewuwā; mac kuṭṭā[2].

Long long (ones I) have sent; cut pingos
Round (ones I) have sent; honey pots
Short short (ones I) have sent; cut meat.

and represent this modified to suit the convenience of the peasant Sinhalese who, as already mentioned, have much Vedda blood in them.

[1] *Muṭṭa* may be a verb, *muṭṭiya* is a pot.

[2] *Kuṭṭa* appears to be derived from v. *kotanawā*, to chop or cut; compare colloquial *bunnā*, "I have drunk," from v. *bonawā* and other instances. We are indebted to Mr Parker for these notes as well as for the transliteration and translation of the message.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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had never thought the matter over. Nevertheless they honour the names which like the Sinhalese they call Yakas with food, dances or offerings. Any monotheistic idea of God is absent both in 'Nature' and in 'Culture' Veddas[1]."

The three strata of belief to which we referred at the beginning of this chapter and which exist among the Veddas of the present day, have not fused so thoroughly that there is any great difficulty in isolating them. We believe they may be tabulated as follows:

I. The Cult of the dead, including the cult of the spirits of recent ancestors, i.e. of the Nae Yaku and the *yaku* of certain Veddas who have been long dead and may well be regarded as heroes. The most important of these is Kande Yaka.

II. The Cult of foreign spirits, who have become naturalised and have taken the friendly protective nature of the Vedda *yaku*.

III. The Cult of foreign spirits who, though not often regarded as such, have retained their foreign nature and are in the main terrible or even hostile.

Another feature of the last stratum of thought is the endowment of true Vedda *yaku* with foreign attributes[2]. When the history of the island is considered, it is not surprising that the first condition, which may be considered the primitive religion of the Veddas, should nowhere be found standing alone at the present day. It is impossible to say how much the Indian invaders influenced the aboriginal inhabitants of Laṅka (Ceylon) when they took possession of the island under Vijeyo about 500 B.C., for the few references made to Veddas in the ancient chronicles of the country throw no light on this subject.

Knox mentions that Veddas paid a tribute of game and honey to the Sinhalese, and in his day there were "wild and tame" Veddas, and it is certain that from the middle ages onwards there was a considerable amount of intercourse between at least the tamer Veddas and the Sinhalese. Therefore it is natural that foreign beliefs should have gradually infiltrated the native Vedda cult.

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] The invocation (No. xiv) to Ambārapoti Kiriamma given on p. 316 is an excellent example of this. Billindi Yaka is here treated as if he were a Sinhalese or Tamil deity.

1,Sangilan & Sangilan 2-8 (1907-1908) 1911
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XXXVI. *Nārunayi saedune, beruvayi saedune. Gini Rāhu Bandira ena velaṭa kadu kīwahamak saedi ga.*

The Na tree is made, and the Bō tree is made. At the time when the chief, Gini Rāhu, comes, a fight with swords will be made.

The Veddas could neither explain the meaning of the words of this invocation, nor state the significance of the whole.

Unuwatura Bubula.

XXXVII. *Gini wahalak sadāla, raṇ kāla pandamak sadāla, raṇ i iṭi sadāla, Gini Rāhu Bandāra raṇ i iṭi sadāla mī magul maduwaṭa waḍinna raṇ mōlat balanna.*

As we have constructed a Fire Palace, as we have made a light (resting) on a golden support (?), as we have made with wax golden arrows, O Chief, Gini Rāhu, as we have made with wax golden arrows, be pleased to proceed to this festival shed and to look at the golden mortar also.

The Veddas of Unuwatura Bubula understood this invocation in a somewhat different sense.

Gini Rāhu Bandar come to this shelter, look upon the golden mortar. The shelter has a roof of fire, within it is a golden torch and golden bees'-wax.

Invocations sung at the Kolamaduwa Ceremony.

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We were told that the *kolamaduwa* ceremony was performed until recently with considerable pomp and circumstance by the Veddas of Bandaraduwa. Tissahami, the Vedda Arachi, gave us the following invocations as some of those that he learnt to sing when as a youth he lived among the Veddas. Tissahami wrote down these invocations after the partial rehearsal of the *kolamaduwa* ceremony which was arranged for our benefit at Henebedda, a description of which is given in Chapter IX.

When discussing the *kolamaduwa* we were told that Veddas were sometimes sent for by the peasant Sinhalese because of the superior protection afforded to the cattle fold by their invocations and dances. The tradition as to this practice was quite definite

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

and we do not doubt that it occurred formerly, but we could hear of no recent instance in which Veddas alone officiated. 782 648

This did not surprise us for we met with no Veddas who knew these long invocations, and we believe that this practice must have ceased throughout the Vedirata at least two or three generations ago. The necessary conditions existed in those days when, as we were assured, there were communities of village Veddas with shaman of repute such as no longer exist, and we may instance the history of Lindegala given on pp. 171 and 172 as a case in point. Nevertheless the custom survives in a modified form, for Tissahami with three Veddas performed a *kolamaduwa* ceremony at Damenegama in 1903 with the object of stopping an epidemic, alleged to be dysentery, which was then raging in the neighbouring villages. [731] [755]

A very large number of spirits are invoked, but as has been indicated in Chapter IX Kande Yaka, Bilindi Yaka, and the *yaku* of the recent dead were not of the number. This demonstrates that the ceremony as it at present exists is essentially foreign, and therefore the length and nature of the three invocations given are not surprising. The invocation to Unapane Kiriamma which recites her deeds agrees well with all we could find out about her independently, and suggests that these invocations arose among such settled village Veddas as those mentioned in the Sinhalese chronicles referred to in the first chapter. 782

The four invocations written down by Tissahami were discussed at length with him, the shaman of the Henebedda Veddas sitting with us, though as this man—a half bred—knew only parts of these invocations and greatly admired Tissahami, the translations obtained in this way only represent the opinion of Tissahami, and presumably that of the Kovil Vanamai Veddas from whom he learnt them in his youth. In these circumstances it is not surprising that two of these translations differ considerably from those furnished by Mr Parker, and this difference is so great in the invocation (No. XXXIX) which should be sung while the leaves are being slashed from the *kolamaduwa* (cf. p. 269) that we have thought it best to give our field version as well as Mr Parker's translation. Some of the allusions, for instance, the reference to the shark contained in the first portion 782 539

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

411 It appears that painted and lacquered arrows were sometimes presented to the Veddas by the Sinhalese kings as signs of gratitude or favour, just as ceremonial forms of other objects were presented to particular Sinhalese[1]. Dr Willey told me of a lacquered bow and arrow which he heard of among a community of sophisticated Veddas, and which he was told ultimately found their way to the Kandy Museum. Among the peasant Sinhalese of Nilgala we heard of a lacquered arrow—said to have been lost recently—which, according to tradition, had been presented many generations ago to the Vedda ancestors of its last owner by one of the kings of Ceylon. With regard to the specimen in the Kandy Museum, the arrow is feathered in the usual Vedda style, the condition of the lacquer on it shows that it is of considerable age. The iron which is said to belong to it is loose, and it is entirely unlike any arrow head we have seen. Instead of having a tang it has a socket into which the end of the shaft must have fitted, and there is a shoulder or "stop" upon the iron. The bow shown us as having been acquired with the arrow was in much better condition and had a small band of silver or some metal resembling silver round it. According to the account given at the museum both specimens were procured from a priest who gave a history of the specimens which does not connect them with any Veddas[2].

224 177 Traps and snares are unknown among the least sophisticated Veddas, but at Danigala we saw a small deadfall trap avowedly introduced.

HONEY.

222 The importance of honey in the Vedda diet has been mentioned in Chapter IV as well as the large part it plays in barter. The honey of the *bambara* (*Apis indica*) is taken in June and July, though at other times of the year small combs are taken

[1] There is in the Colombo Museum a beautifully lacquered weaver's shuttle, presented to certain cloth makers by one of the Sinhalese kings.

[2] It was stated that the bow and arrow had been found in the verandah of a disused house with some broken articles said to have been thrown there, having been taken from the *walawwa* (house) of Molligoda Adigar. The house was in the Kegalle district. The villagers gave the bow and arrow to a priest who brought them to the museum.

2: Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

those only who are the most barbarous, who have preserved in all essentials their isolation from other races intact, that we must expect to find the most marked peculiarities.

The term Veddah—or Weddah—in itself, indicates no particular race. It simply means "a hunter", and is, in India, applied to aboriginal or barbarous tribes generally.*

In this sense, a great portion of the population of the eastern parts of Ceylon appears, at some period or another, to have been so called. There are still extensive districts known as "Weddirata", or the country of the Veddahs, the inhabitants of which, although they are, owing to the remoteness of their situation, less civilized than the bulk of the people of the island, are not Veddahs, but Singhalese, in kindred, religion, and customs.

It is highly probable that the people of these remote districts and of others, where Veddah descent is still claimed, are more directly derived from the race which originally stocked the island than those who inhabit such parts of it as were more accessible to the settlers from Continental India, who, in process of time superseded the aborigines.†

But the people distinguished in Ceylon, by the name of Veddahs—wholly distinct, as I have said, even from those who, though now Singhalese, yet describe themselves as descended from Veddah ancestors, are to be found in the districts of Batti-

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* Weddâ (Singhalese) an archer; some trace it to Bedda (Jungle). Introduction to Alwis' Sidath Sangarawa.

Vedân (Tamil), a hunter—one who lives in the woods; a name given to rude tribes, aborigines in the Indian peninsula. Vedan (Tamil), corruptly Vaidan, Veddah, also Beddah, or Weden—a hunter, a fowler; a name given to wild tribes, inhabiting the hills and forests of the south of India almost in a state of nature—probably the aboriginal race of the peninsula. Prof. Wilson's *Glossary of Revenue and Judicial Terms*. The word Veddah is still used in Ceylon as a hunter, and so applied to persons, not "Veddah" in the limited sense of the word.

† The Weddirates were, under the native government, exempted from all service save military—the most honourable; and rendered tribute to the king, of beeswax, dried flesh, and honey, which was continued for some time after we obtained possession of the Kandyan provinces. But the inhabitants of these districts marry and associate with those of the adjoining districts, and are apparently the same people. There may exist some ethnical difference; indeed, I think even an unscientific eye can detect a difference in the appearance, not only of these people, but of the Wanniahs of the northern and central parts of Ceylon, when compared with the ordinary natives. I have tried to obtain skulls of the different races, of which there are many in the island, viz., Tamils, Moors, Singhalese of the low country and of the Kandyan provinces, the people of the Weddiratas—Wanniahs of Newerakalawiya and Batticalas—Mookwas of the north-west and east provinces, Malays, Coorowas, Rhodias, etc., but it is most difficult to obtain them. The subject may be worthy of the attention of the Ethnological Society, though beside the object of this paper.

2:Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

But dogs are still prized by the Veddah. Of all his possessions, he values most his bow, which is placed under his head when he sleeps; and next in his estimation is the dog who guards it, sleeping always at his master's head. "What would you do," I asked a Veddah once, "if your bow were stolen?" "No one could steal it," he replied; "the dog would not let him." "But if any one killed your dog." His answer was significant. He clutched his axe, and made a motion as though he would cut down the man who did so.

And this was no idle threat. In 1849, a Bintenne Veddah deliberately knocked a man's brains out, for having, as he believed, killed two of his dogs by magic.* He never attempted to deny what he had done. "It is true," he said at the coroner's inquest, "I killed him, and I did so because he had killed, by witchcraft, the two dogs I had reared and hunted with for my support." He added, as quite a secondary justification, that the murdered man had also practised his magic arts on himself. He detailed, with great minuteness, how he lay wait for him, and how, while he, with his wife and child, was resting in the shade, he watched his opportunity, and felled him with a club: and—strong evidence of the proverbial truthfulness of the Veddahs—he described how, by his influence (he was the head man of one of the small tribes), he intimidated the widow and father of his victim, and so kept the murder secret for some days.

None but the woman saw the deed; and had falsehood been the normal characteristic of the Veddahs, as I fear it is with too many of their more civilized compatriots, he would probably have escaped punishment. He was tried and convicted of murder, but the sentence of death was commuted to several years imprisonment. It was hoped that, having received some instructions in goal, he might carry back with him some little civilization to his own people.

But imprisonment was to him a greater punishment than death. He pined away in confinement, and was released to save his life. I have often seen him in Bintenne. Civilization has not done much for him. He differs from his brethren only in having acquired a taste for jewelry, for he wears with apparent pride, a tawdry brass chain round his waist.

The Veddahs eat the flesh of elk,† deer, monkeys, pigs, the iguano, and pengolin—all flesh, indeed, but that of oxen, elephants,

* The murdered man was not a Veddah, but a low-country vagrant; several of whom have, of late years, taken up their abode near the Bintenne Veddahs, to their great annoyance.

† What is commonly termed an elk in Ceylon, is the Samba deer (*rusa Aristotelis*).

2:Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
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They are very rude in their cookery, often burning the flesh in the fire, which they produce by rubbing together two pieces of the wood of the vellan tree (*Pterospermum suberifolium*, Sam.). A hole is scooped in one piece with an arrow-blade, and the other, which is pointed, is inserted into it, and twirled rapidly round between the hands till it ignites.

They are fond of betel, when they can get it; but in lieu of the compound which goes by this name, they have the following substitutes. Instead of the betel leaf, they eat the astringent bark of the demette tree (*Gmelina Asiatica, L.*), or the leaves of an aromatic plant called the madurutala (*Ocimum sanctum*—or *O. canum, L.*) For areka nut, they chew the bark of the moratree (*Nephelium longanum*, Camb.), the oupaloo or wellan connitta tree; and calcined snail shells, or the bark of the areloo tree (*Terminalia chebula*, Retz.), supplies the place of lime or chunam, which forms so important an ingredient in a prepared quid of betel. They do not smoke, and are very temperate, drinking water only.

I need not say that they are very simple and primitive in their habits. The "wilder sort" have had too little communication with the Singhalese to have acquired the vices of civilization. The few necessaries of life which the forest does not supply, such as steel and iron for their arrow-heads and axes, and the very scanty clothing which they wear, they obtain by barter, their wax and honey, elk flesh, and ivory, being eagerly sought after by the neighbouring Singhalese, or "the ubiquitous Moors."

They are very harmless, too; though, according to Knox, were much dreaded once. Even yet there are traditions that they kidnapped children, ran off with young girls, way-laid travellers, and attacked the tavalams or bullock-caravans. But now, at any rate, they are as peaceful as it is possible to be. They are proverbially truthful and honest. They are fond of their children, who early become useful to them; the boys soon are familiar with the use of the bow, while the girls, armed with a pointed stick, add to the family larder at a very tender age, by killing the iguano, and digging for wild yams.

Their constancy to their wives is a very remarkable trait in their character in a country where conjugal fidelity is certainly not classed as the highest of domestic virtues. Infidelity, whether in the husband or the wife, appears to be unknown, and I was

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kadura (*strychnos, nux vomica*), the diwi kaduru (*taberna montana dichotoma*, Roxb.), the kolong (*nauclea cordifolia*, Roxb.), the milla (*vitex altissima*, Linn.), the mora (*nephelium longanum*, Camb.), the kaluwera (ebony, *ebenum*, Retz), which they say would stupify them; but though the three first mentioned trees would be injurious, it is probably that the rest would be harmless.

2:Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
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Tennent says truly, that they have "no system of caste among themselves; but, singular to say, this degraded race is still regarded by the Singhalese as of most honourable extraction, and is recognized by them as belonging to one of the highest castes;"* and he relates a legend, in which he says this belief originates; a legend, however, at which, he tells us, the Veddahs themselves smile, and of which they profess their ignorance. 648 [564]

As I shall afterwards show, I do not think this legend, which is confessedly not a Veddah tradition, has anything to do with the consideration with which, so far as their caste goes, the Singhalese regard them. Were there no better reason, the fact that the legend is by no means universal among the Singhalese residing in their vicinity, would probably be sufficient reason to reject it.

But Tennent has not been correctly informed with regard to their own belief regarding their own origin. For strange as it appears, they claim to be of royal descent. Beyond this vague assertion they profess to know nothing. They do not attempt to trace their descent from any particular king. They know nothing of their history. This is their *one* tradition; and though the neighbouring Singhalese, on whom they affect to look down, smile at their claim to such an illustrious origin, they do "regard them as of most honourable extraction," and in reply to any inquiry respecting it, only repeat the Veddah version of their royal lineage. It is said, too, that in the time of the native government the Veddahs always spoke of the king as "hoora," or "cousin."† 173

The Veddahs have no particular name by which they distinguish themselves, which would aid us in speculating on their origin. They simply call themselves "Weddah," and are so called, while they speak of the ordinary natives of the country as "Singhalese." The term "Habara," or "wild, barbarous," is applied to Veddahs, in books, and also "Vannacharakiya," which means "a hunter." 101

As Knox has told us, they speak the Singhalese language; but they do so with an accent and intonation so strange, that it sounds like some foreign tongue. It seems, as it were, "broken Singhalese," such as a man would speak to whom the language was an acquired one, so much does their pronunciation differ from that of their Kandyan neighbours. Although the identity between the Veddah dialect and Singhalese is evident, when they are compared with each other, it would require a very quick and accurate ear, indeed, to detect the similarity between them when both are spoken. 191 197

* Tennent, vol. ii, part ix, c. iii.

† It is reported, too, that some Veddahs do not claim royal descent, but that only a portion of them do. The Bicetean and Nilgala Veddahs certainly, say they, are "Raja-wansiya," of royal lineage.

5: Spinel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

361 "But surely there are Veddas in Galmede; everybody told us so," I insisted.

"Veddas of a sort, yes," was the reply; "and perhaps among them, one or two good ones; but the best live away in the caves, in those rocks yonder. Now if you'd come yesterday you'd have seen two of them who brought me some *goas* in exchange for betel and tobacco."

000 Disappointment melted into sudden hope. So, there were real Veddas still left. But oh! these people. Was ever chase so disheartening? Always the promise, never the fulfilment. Were we chasing phantoms of the wilderness, mocking spirits of a dead race, intolerant of the intrusion on their tranquil sepulchres?

There was no possibility of visiting the cave-Veddas that day. So I decided to stay over and visit them the next morning, travelling across the pathless hills to the high road; while my companion,—fed up to the teeth by now at the very mention of the word Vedda, and in a bad way with festering tick-bites, heat exhaustion, and lack of fresh food—tried to dissuade me from an adventure that promised no success. But I was bent on it. So we agreed that most of the bearers should accompany him to Maha Oya by an easier route, while I remained behind with three men and a two days' ration of tinned food.

With nightfall my prospect of securing a guide to the Galmede hills was no nearer than in the morning. The only man who could be relied on was down with fever. I was seated disconsolately in the Chetty's garden after dinner, close to a chatting group, when suddenly I saw a shadow slip in out of the darkness and join them; there was some whispering; "Ah, is this the man they call Meenemaruwa?*" I heard
● 648 one of my bearers ask.

241 "Yes, I am he they call murderer, rogue and everything besides."
115 The answer came loud and unabashed from the man himself.

Rumour had spoken of him as far away as Kotelinda; and it had not spoken kindly. He lived three miles up the river by himself, inspiring the neighbourhood with awe of him. He was in a quandary that night. Returning home after a short absence, he had found that his brother had been taken into custody for illicit *chena* cultivation. He waxed eloquent on his wrongs, while the others listened: "Now what I want to know," he said "is why they should have taken my brother, who is a fool and cannot say a word in his defence, when they might have taken me? No, they wouldn't do that because I can talk. My brother cultivated the *chena* it is true, but it was I who gave it to him; the land is mine. They want me to pay taxes, I who am a Vedda! My grandmother was a
[826 Vedda of Veddas, you should have seen her. How well I remember the
789] piece of human liver she carried in her betel-bag. We children would take it from her and want to throw it away; she would pluck it from us, saying, 'Hu, what do you want with this, isn't it mine?' Io, why do they treat me like this? Someone is angry with me. It must be the *aratchi*. No, the *aratchi* is good to me; he and I are friends. Now *Hettyar*, what must I do? I must go to the courts myself and get a petition drawn." Thus he talked interminably, while I wondered how a Vedda could come to argue like a lawyer.

"Now leave all that aside," I interrupted, "and tell me how I am to see these Veddas of the rocks tomorrow."

*Murderer.